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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/737,195	12/15/2003	Yulun Yang	022001-000843US	5837

7590

11/03/2005

Patent Dept.
Intuitive Surgical, Inc
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EXAMINER

LEUBECKER, JOHN P

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3739

DATE MAILED: 11/03/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/737,195

Applicant(s)

YANG ET AL.

Examiner

John P. Leubecker

Art Unit

3739

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 15 December 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 19-26 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 19,20,24 and 25 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 21-23 and 26 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 9/23/04, 10/18/04
- ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- ☐ Other: _____

Specification

1. The disclosure is objected to because of the following informalities: the continuation data in the first paragraph of the specification needs to be updated (e.g., patent numbers).

Appropriate correction is required.

Double Patenting

2. The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. See *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent is shown to be commonly owned with this application. See 37 CFR 1.130(b).

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

3. Claims 19, 20, 24 and 25 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-9 and 11 of U.S. Patent No. 6,699,177. For double patenting to exist as between the rejected claims and patent claims, it must be determined that the rejected claims are not patentably distinct from the patent claims. In order to make this determination, it first must be determined whether there are any differences between the rejected claims and the patent claims and, if so, whether those differences render the claims patentably distinct.

It is clear that all the elements of claim 19 are to be found in claim 4 (as it encompasses claim 1). The difference between claim 19 of the application and claim 4 of the patent lies in the fact that the application claim recites “electrical communication” between the controller and robotic arms, a “proportional movement” between the handle and robotic arms, that the means for switching connections is a multiplexer, and that the handle man “control the first or second instrument”. However, the first two differences are inherent aspects of the relationships between the controller and robotic arms and the handle and robotic arms. As to the specificity of a multiplexer, the “means for switching” in the patent encompasses at least what is disclosed in the specification and a multiplexer is disclosed as being encompassed by such means. As to the last difference, “control” of the instruments may be nothing more than movement of such, in which case control (movement) of the robotic arms, as claimed in the patent, will inherently control (move) the instruments. Since claim 19, as broadly as claimed, is anticipated by claim 4 of the patent, it is not patentably distinct from claim 4. As to claim 20, note patented claim 4. In its broadest sense, any surgical instrument is “articulatable” by the mere fact that it is intended to be moved. As to claims 24 and 25, note claims 11 and 2, respectively.

4. Claims 19, 20, 24 and 25 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-9 and 11 of U.S. Patent No. 6,102,850. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because the reasons set forth above.

Allowable Subject Matter

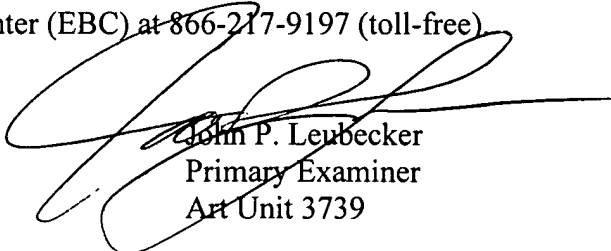
5. Claims 21-23 and 26 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to John P. Leubecker whose telephone number is (571) 272-4769. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday, 6:00 AM to 2:30 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Linda C.M. Dvorak can be reached on (571) 272-4764. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


John P. Leubecker
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3739

jpl